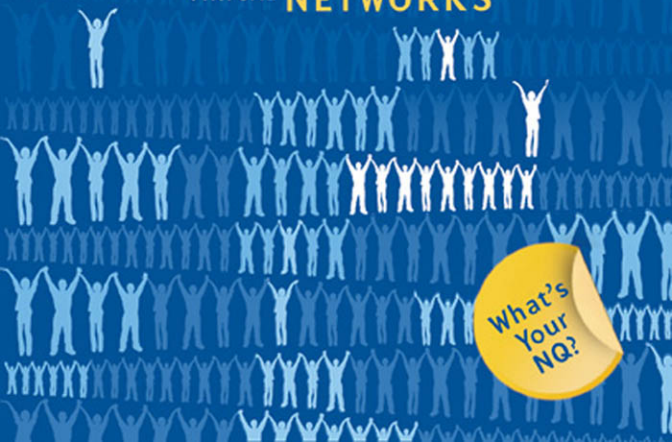


MICHAEL DULWORTH

The Connect Effect

BUILDING STRONG PERSONAL,
PROFESSIONAL, AND
VIRTUAL **NETWORKS**



What's
Your
NQ?

An Excerpt From

***The Connect Effect:
Building Strong Personal, Professional, and Virtual Networks***

by Michael Dulworth

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Introduction

The Power of Networks

The first time I saw the power of the Connect Effect was when I was trying to get into college. I didn't study very hard in high school, and this was reflected in my B-minus average. So I asked my uncle Dick for help. He had attended the University of Michigan and still lived close to the school in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He and Aunt Anita knew many professors and administrators at the university. Because of their connections, I got an interview with an admissions officer and was able to talk my way into summer school. The admissions officer wasn't willing to overlook my lackluster grades, but he did make a deal with me: if I proved myself in summer school, the university would admit me in the fall as a freshman. I did and it did.

The benefits of the Connect Effect can be as varied and rich as we make them. Consider some of these comments from the real-life people I talked to (through networking!) as I researched this book:

- ▶ “Networking feeds my soul . . . It stimulates my thinking and takes me to different possibilities.”
- ▶ “I can't think of much that I've achieved in either life or career without networking: it's the currency for getting things done.”

- ▶ “Networking pulls me in all kinds of unintended directions, often leading to being in the right place at the right time with the right people.”
- ▶ “Networking has totally changed my life and career. Everything I do is through a network.”
- ▶ “Networking is the means by which I’ve landed all of my jobs in my adult life.”
- ▶ “Leadership is a collaborative effort. And it takes a network of people.”
- ▶ “It takes a network of people to realize a dream.”

Think about those comments for a moment. Networking can change your life, feed your soul, and help you realize your dreams. Who wouldn’t want to network and achieve the power of the Connect Effect?

As your network of friends and associates grows and improves, this Connect Effect increases rapidly. In fact, the Connect Effect is exponential in nature, not linear, because each new connection brings his or her own network. The Connect Effect truly proves that $1 + 1 = 4$ (or more)!

Throughout the book, I’ll provide personal stories, frameworks, tools, and resources to help you become a better networker so that you, in turn, can be happier and more successful. I draw from my experience in building, nurturing, and leveraging my personal network, as well as over twenty-five years of experience in helping people develop their own, and on the insights and wisdom of expert networkers, network researchers, and people who have professional responsibility to manage networks. I have facilitated all types of networks throughout my career. Today, I am the CEO of a professional networking company. In many ways, networking is my life, and I embrace its potential both personally and professionally. We’ll begin by

looking at some of the many Connect Effects networks can bring.

The Uses of Networks

Let's look more carefully at exactly how networks can be used to achieve personal and professional success—to realize our dreams. In my own life, and in discussions with others, I have identified a number of critical areas in which networks can enhance our lives:

- ▶ Personal satisfaction
- ▶ Career guidance
- ▶ Door opening
- ▶ Problem solving and feedback
- ▶ Learning and expertise
- ▶ Changing the world

I have firsthand experience with each of these Connect Effects of networking. What's more, my research on networking and conversations with others show exactly how powerful networks are in each of these areas. Let's take a look.

Personal Satisfaction

On the most basic level, networking can bring deep personal satisfaction. We are, after all, social animals. Making friends, helping others, collaborating on a worthwhile project are all very satisfying experiences that can feed your soul, as Nisha Advani, director of executive development at Genentech told me. Born and raised in India, Nisha has lived on three continents and now focuses on using science principles to enhance leadership and organizational effectiveness at Genentech. She

sees networking as deeply satisfying: “Networking feeds my soul. It helps me to stay alert and continuously learn, and those are very deep values for me. I appreciate having a network that brings up a lot of rich ideas, both personally, in my social space and family, as well as professionally. It stimulates my thinking and takes me to different possibilities.”

The person in my life who best embodies the personal satisfaction inherent in networking is my aunt Norma. At age eighty-nine, she makes new friends every time she leaves the house, just for the sheer fun of it. My cousin Kristan describes breakfast at a local café with Aunt Norma (Kristan’s grandma):

She greeted everyone we passed, and while we waited for a table, she struck up a conversation with a mother and her twentysomething daughter who seemed somewhat distressed. Grandma talked comfortably with them as if she had known them her whole life. They shared their sadness that the daughter, who was pregnant, her husband, and their little girl were moving to Germany the following day.

Grandma listened, smiled, and in a very positive and matter-of-fact voice said to the mother, “Well, you’re just going to have to get yourself over to Germany to visit!” They all laughed and agreed. As an observer, I could see the tension in their faces melt away—the result of a random and brief encounter with a woman who, in her almost nine decades on the planet, has never left North America.

On Norma’s eighty-eighth birthday, she told me about the numerous phone calls and the sixty birthday cards she had received. “And those are only the friends that are still alive,” she said.

I encourage you to think of someone in your own life who creates networks of caring people simply through having a friendly and loving manner. You may come up with several such people.

Career Guidance

In 1983, I graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in history. At that point, I dipped into my rather limited network—specifically, my dad and my uncle Jack—for help finding a job.

My uncle Jack was well connected from his work as an insurance broker in Houston, Texas, and was able to set up interviews with the offices of James Baker III, chief of staff in the Reagan White House, and Texas senator Lloyd Benson. Through his own networks, my dad arranged for an interview with the U.S. Department of Labor. I received job offers from all three places but chose the job at the Department of Labor because it paid the most (\$10,300 per year!).

This was my first big lesson in the power of the Connect Effect: three great job offers for a young man straight out of college and all of them due to the robust networks developed by my father and uncle. Of course, many others have similar stories. One of the people I interviewed for this book is Jory Des Jardins, a smart, humorous, Web-savvy entrepreneur, writer, and blogger. Jory coined the phrase “networking: it’s the currency for getting things done,” which I quoted above. Jory makes the point that people starting out need advocates in today’s fast-paced, competitive job market:

After graduating from college, I sent out résumés, cold-called for jobs, did what anyone without contacts would do, and nothing ever came of it. I’d hoped that my grade point average would be all that I needed, but I learned early on that my accomplishments wouldn’t help me unless I had the right advocates. Fortunately, a friend’s father put in a good word for me with a publishing house, and I got my first “real” job. I didn’t know it at the time, but that was networking. From there everything I had, from jobs to a wedding caterer, I got through

networking. Still, I don't think I appreciated the powerful impact that networking had on getting things done until I co-founded BlogHer. I met my partners through networking, and then we tapped a network of influential women bloggers to help us build our first conference in four months. We never would have been able to tap into pockets of smaller blogging communities nor get the word out about our event—which sold out—so quickly without a network. The entire process of building a community, and later a company, was the result of tapping a few key people, who in turn tapped their respective communities, who tapped thousands through their blogs.

Most people appreciate how networking can help in finding and landing jobs. But many don't understand that it's actually *the most important thing* you can do in your job search. Think about it: the bestselling bible for job hunters, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* is essentially a guide to networking.

Door Opening

Closely related to career guidance, “door opening” refers to the introductions people in your network can make for you, whether you are in the job market or not. Networking opens doors for you that would otherwise remain shut; it gives you access to people.

To illustrate the power a network has to open doors, let me describe how I got a book published at John Wiley & Sons. These days, it's very difficult to get published as a first-time author unless you're a recognized expert in your field. But my network came through.

I'd been renovating houses as a hobby since I was about thirty years old. I renovated a condo in Washington, DC, a historic farmhouse in West Virginia, and, with my wife, a house in Sonoma, California. While renovating the house in Sonoma, I

got the idea to write a book on the strategy and execution of renovating houses to build personal wealth, since I'd made quite a bit of money on my first two renovations. I put together a one-page outline of the book and e-mailed it to a contact I had at Wiley, Larry Alexander. (I had met Larry earlier, when he was with Jossey-Bass Publishers, through an old University of Michigan connection, Dan Denison, whom I'd met when he was a professor at the University. Dan was working with another professor at the University, Robert Quinn, who had published a number of books at Jossey-Bass.) The next day, Larry put me in touch with the head of Wiley's real estate publishing group, and within two weeks I had a contract and an advance to write the book, which I wrote with my wife (*Renovate to Riches*, Dulworth and Goodwin, John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

John Foster, head of talent management and organization development at IDEO, a well-known design company, says he is "the living stereotype" of the connected networker. He told me that networking opens all sorts of doors for him and gave me an example: "Very recently I got involved in a corporate roundtable that's sponsored by Harvard University. Through my participation, I've received many excellent references and connections. It even led to my former university asking me to be on an advisory board for one of their colleges."

Joanne Black, the author of *No More Cold Calling*, offered me a different perspective on the value of getting introductions and referrals from people in your network. When you are introduced by a mutual acquaintance, she pointed out, not only is the door opened, but things are different when you walk through it: "When we get a qualified referral, which means someone wants to talk to us, we're presold. We have a different kind of conversation. We have credibility. We have trust."

The ability to use networks to open doors, gain introductions to people, and gain access is important for virtually anything you need to do in your personal and professional life.

Problem Solving

Networks are a powerful problem-solving resource that people naturally turn to when they need help. Recently a business contact called me and said his daughter had injured herself while sailing and needed to see a specialist in San Francisco immediately. She had just moved to the area and didn't know where to go. One of my company's board members had recently been injured in a skiing accident, so I asked her for help. She gave me the name of the best orthopedic surgeon in the Bay Area, and the next day my colleague's daughter had an appointment and the best medical care.

Another business colleague told me that he was having trouble finding a publisher for a book he and his business partners were writing. I sent an introductory e-mail to Cedric Crocker at Jossey-Bass Publishers, and within a few months my colleague had a book contract.

Rob Cross, whom we will visit several times over the course of this book, says people often don't realize how top performers solve problems. Rob is a professor in the management department of the University of Virginia's McIntire School of Commerce and coauthor of *The Hidden Power of Social Networks*. He is also the founder of the Network Roundtable, a group of forty organizations that research networks and apply network techniques to critical business issues. He generously offered to spend time with me explaining his research on networks.

"I became interested in networks about ten years ago when I was working for Arthur Anderson," Rob told me. "At that time, I was really focused on improving knowledge-worker productivity." "Knowledge worker" is a term that was originally popularized by the management guru Peter Drucker and refers to people whose jobs primarily involve creating, managing, or disseminating information. Rob told me that when he first looked into how to improve the productivity of knowledge

workers, everybody at that time was treating it as a computer database issue. “Yet when I talked to people about how they solved problems, nobody ever said, ‘I jump on the knowledge repository or a database.’ Instead, they reached out to their network when they had a new client, a new project, or some sort of problem they were trying to resolve. They said, ‘We pick up the phone, walk down the hall, and work our network in various ways to get information, resources, or approvals or other things we need to get something done.’”

When you have a network of thoughtful, experienced, and smart people, you actually have a cadre of “consultants” you can call on to help you deal with difficult personal and professional issues. These are people who have often faced similar problems, opportunities, and challenges. There is significant comfort in knowing that you have a group of trusted and objective colleagues you can call on when you need help, advice, and support.

Two kinds of networks are especially effective in problem solving: peer-to-peer networks and communities of practice. A peer-to-peer network encompasses people who have similar roles and responsibilities and face similar problems. A community of practice is a group of people who join together to help each other solve problems and develop expertise in an area of shared interest. We will explore peer-to-peer networks in depth in chapter 6 and communities of practice in much more detail in chapter 8.

Learning and Expertise

When we think about learning, we tend to focus on the obvious sources of instruction: courses, books, self-study, and the like. In my own experience, which is corroborated by others, networking can be a more powerful resource for learning than any of these.

I recently did a Google search on the phrase “learning network” and got more than a million hits. Learning is a prime Connect Effect. Talk to people who make it a habit to reach out and network, and you’ll hear time and again how much they learn from others. On a personal level, we learn about good books, new movies, and great restaurants from people in our networks. On a professional level, we learn about new developments in our fields, what’s happening in other fields, who is breaking new ground, who can help us learn new skills, and much, much more.

Early in my career, my dad set up meetings with five very accomplished people so I could discuss my career goals and aspirations with them. I met with Brian Usilaner, who worked for the Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO); Tom Schneider, a prominent labor lawyer; Malcolm Lovell, a former undersecretary of labor and fellow at the Brookings Institution; Bill Hunt, vice president of human resources at SkyChef; and Michael Maccoby, management guru and author of *The Gamesman*. I asked each of these prominent men to tell me about his career and career progression as well as what had led to his success. I also discussed my own career, my career interests, and whether I should go to graduate school, then listened intently to their advice and guidance. I learned so much from these meetings, talking to people face-to-face. They had more impact than reading a slew of books could ever achieve.

Bill Morin, the founder and former chairman of Drake Beam Morin, the well-known career management firm, told me that networking is “a vital force for learning about where you want to go with your career, learning about what you need to know about your profession.” Bill got into my network through my father’s. (My dad hired Bill out of graduate school and they’ve stayed friends ever since.)

Learning from your network can be more powerful than other types of learning because you are often learning from other people who have “been there and done that.” Etienne Wenger, author of *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, is a leading authority on communities of practice who is working with my company to develop a proprietary community operating philosophy and framework. He explained to me one reason why networks are such powerful resources for learning:

I think that there is a shift happening in the world today where people are starting to recognize that in fact network interactions are one of the keys to learning not only for professionals but for people in general. Because when you have a peer network you hear the story of someone else who is in a similar situation to you so there is almost an immediate validity to what you are hearing because you recognize that this person faces the same problems. There is something about hearing the words of someone who is a peer that makes the relevance of the knowledge that you get very immediate.

Networks are often set up for the explicit goal of learning. My friend Marshall Goldsmith, a leading executive coach and author of the bestselling book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, formed the Learning Network about ten years ago. He invited other executive coaches, executive development professionals, and leadership experts to come together to share experiences and learn from each other at annual meetings. He asked people such as Sally Helgesen (author of *The Female Advantage*) and Jim Kouzes (coauthor of *The Leadership Challenge*) to join. Jim told me, “Marshall invited me to join that network. Marshall Goldsmith was somebody I was working with because of a publication he was working on. I recently attended the tenth meeting of the Learning Network. It's a very

informal meeting. There's an agenda, but it's not always followed. We get together. We share experiences." And everyone, he said, learns a lot from one another.

Innovation cannot happen without learning. They go hand in hand, as John Zapolski, a partner with the Management Innovation Group, told me when I interviewed him. A former filmmaker, technologist, and designer who has worked at Wells Fargo and Yahoo!, John is intensely interested in learning and innovation. According to John, networks promote cross-fertilization, which is what innovation is all about. "I think innovation happens most of the time by people who have understandings from one domain and are able to take lessons from that domain and apply them to a whole separate domain—maybe taking a business model from the financial services industry and applying that to the airline industry. That's a very ripe source of innovation. And that only happens when there are connections that allow people to cross-fertilize like that."

He added that it is important to focus beyond your own area of specialization: "Industries, domains, and functions tend to get very insular if left to their own natural tendencies. Actively seeking to be in touch with people who are outside of an industry or domain that you belong to is a vital component to being able to bring in new thinking that ultimately is going to drive innovation."

A rich, rewarding life is very much dependent on continuous learning, and networking is an important learning tool.

Changing the World

During the past year, in the blocks surrounding my office in downtown San Francisco, I noticed a number of middle-aged women sitting on the sidewalk with begging cups. By engaging one of these women in conversation, I learned that she and most of the others were between the ages of fifty and sixty-five.

Women over sixty-five are able to use Social Security payments to pay for lodging, but those without Social Security or other means of support often become destitute and homeless. Most avoid homeless shelters because they have suffered abuse from homeless men in the shelters.

At present, I am engaged in what I call the "VeraMax Project" (named after my two grandmothers, Vera Dulworth and Maxine Cross). Because of someone in my network, I attended a Democratic fund-raiser in the fall of 2006, where I met the mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, who introduced me to the most senior official in his administration focused on homeless issues, Trent Rhorer. Trent then set up a meeting between the team I put together to bring the VeraMax House to reality (a lawyer, an architect, a clinical psychologist, a commercial builder, an interior designer, etc.) and the heads of the key agencies in San Francisco that deal with the homeless issue. I'm confident that through the Connect Effect, this project will ultimately result in a shelter for these women, enabling them to leave the streets and start new lives.

This example is just one illustration of how strong networks can change the world. Other, more far-reaching examples include President Clinton's Global Initiative and Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, who formed a cooperative to provide microloans to poor women in Bangladesh. (I discussed both of these in the preface.) These are networks designed not to help their participants but to change the world. Remember this quotation from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Mutual Success and the Connect Effect

It's important to emphasize that the benefits discussed here need to be mutual. As a skilled networker, your need is to see

that all the people in your network achieve success. The old adage “You get what you give” is doubly true with networks. Just as you can use your network to open doors, you should open doors for others. Just as you turn to people in your network to deal with problems you encounter, you should make sure you are generous in your offers to help others deal with the challenges they face. And as you seek to learn from others, you should help others learn and share your knowledge and experience freely.

One of the first keys to success is to extend yourself and help the people in your network, regardless of whether you think the favor will be returned. Marshall Goldsmith expressed this idea very directly when we talked: “To me, a key to networking is not focusing on what you can get—the key to networking is focusing on what you can give. My general philosophy is very simple. Find great people, give them things, and work on a relationship where they try to give me as much as I give them.”

Virtually everyone I talked to for this book agreed with this philosophy. And they all readily agreed to spend time with me to share their insights, knowledge, and experience. They were eager to give to you, the reader of this book, what help they could, never having met you. That’s what people who truly see networking as a way of life are all about.

The more goodwill you spread across your network, the more powerful your network will be. And the more powerful your network is, the more profound an effect it will have on your personal and professional life.

In the next chapter, we will take a look at the status of your network right now—and see how it might be strengthened.



Becoming a Highly Effective Networker

1

What's Your Networking Quotient?



As we have seen, people are finding that strong personal, professional, and virtual networks are an increasingly essential element in their development, effectiveness, and well-being. Just look at the popularity of virtual networks such as MySpace, Flickr, LinkedIn, and Ryze. A strong network can help you navigate rapid change in a number of ways, including broadening your exposure to information and your access to expertise.

Networking is something that we all do naturally every day; we just may not call it that. The people who are most successful in life do it purposefully. This book is to help you do what you do naturally more consciously, more systematically, and more effectively.

In this chapter, you will have an opportunity to assess your NQ, or networking quotient. By having a single measure of your ability to develop strong networks—your NQ—you'll understand the strength of your network and where you can improve.

Before we get to the assessment of your NQ, let me share with you my equation for success:

$$IQ + EQ + NQ = Success$$

IQ is the capacity to learn and understand and can be measured by standardized tests. EQ is an abbreviation for emotional intelligence quotient. In his bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman asserts that EQ describes an ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups.

IQ is pretty much a fixed capability in all of us. You may be very smart but probably don't have the IQ of Stephen Hawking, the theoretical physicist. If we can't change our IQ and want to be more successful, what can we do?

We have some control over our EQ, so that can be a place to spend some time. It's an excellent idea for all of us to better understand ourselves and others from an emotional intelligence point of view. But this can take us only so far. We all seem to be wired in certain ways, and it's unlikely that personal understanding, psychotherapy, and self-development are going to change our innate traits or behaviors.

You probably won't be surprised, then, that I think our NQ is where we have the greatest potential for exponential change. *We have almost 100 percent control over our ability to build, nurture, and leverage our networks.* Some might argue that being an extrovert or an introvert can greatly affect, if not determine, one's NQ score, but my experience tells me that this is not the case. Some of the best networkers I've ever met are introverts—and that includes me!

So, $IQ + EQ + NQ = \text{Success}$ —and the best way to improve this equation is by improving your NQ. Before you can improve it, however, you need to know what your NQ is. First, let's take a look at what makes a strong network to begin with.

The Qualities of Strong Networks

A number of years ago, Rob Cross, whom we met earlier, wrote, "What really distinguishes high performers from the rest of the

pack is their ability to maintain and leverage personal networks. The most effective create and tap large, diversified networks that are rich in experience and span all organizational boundaries.”³

Let's unpack that statement since it captures many of the qualities of strong networks.

Quantity

Size matters—you never know when an important connection will lead to a positive outcome. Virtually everyone I talked to in researching this book stressed that larger networks are better networks. John Zapolski of the Management Innovation Group, told me, “I am constantly looking to expand my network, especially people on the periphery of my network.” The more people you have in your network, the more opportunities you have open to you, the more knowledge you can access, and the more talent you can tap.

Relationships

Vibrant networks are more than a collection of business cards or e-mail addresses: they are built on relationships. When you have strong relationships with people, they are more willing to spend time with you, share information with you, open doors for you, and the like. You have to build those relationships, and you do that by showing a genuine interest in other people. IDEO's John Foster told me that a critical success factor in building a strong network is “making sure that you're dealing in a reciprocal relationship. You must give back to the relationship in some meaningful way, and there has to be a real exchange of value for a network relationship to be worthwhile.”

Diversity

As Rob Cross indicated, the best networks are diverse and span organizational boundaries. If everyone in your network looks

like you, acts like you, and has your interests, how are you ever going to learn new things, discover new opportunities, or move in new directions? Let's hear from John Zapolski again:

I pretty actively look for opportunities to go to new events that are really outside of the typical domain of events that I would normally go to. For example, I met a woman recently who works in innovation, but she has a deep science background, so . . . I asked her a lot of questions about her background in bioengineering and genetics and I learned a lot. Inevitably, I'll find out what groups people like this belong to or events that they go to, and maybe I'll try to attend just so I can meet people outside of my core network. I look for those new events where I can get pulled into a direction of a deeper interest.

Meeting diverse people with very different interests is the best way to keep expanding your horizons.

Quality

While quantity is important, quality is perhaps even more important. What does "quality" mean here? As Rob indicated, a network should be "rich in experience." Quality refers to people who are experienced, who have strong networks of their own, who have authority, who can open doors, and who command respect in their fields. Scott Saslow, executive director of the Institute of Executive Development, recently told me, "There is too much focus on the quantity of one's network right now (I have 8 billion colleagues from LinkedIn), and eventually the focus will shift to quality." In today's egalitarian world, we may try to treat everyone the same. But when it comes to networking, that makes little sense.

Now that we understand what makes for strong, vibrant networks, we can turn to measuring your NQ.

What's Your NQ?

Before you answer the questions below, take some time to list all the people in your network universe, which consists of three primary types of networks: (1) your personal network, (2) your professional network, and (3) your virtual network. Each plays a role in determining your NQ.

Your personal network is made up of your family, extended family, school friends and contacts, lifelong friends, and so on. It is also made up of your active friends (people you see face-to-face at least once a month) and people from your church, clubs, activities, neighborhood, and community. Your professional network includes contacts from previous jobs, colleagues from other firms, and contacts in your current organization.

Your virtual network comprises people you know only through online interactions or other non-face-to-face connections. Obviously, these networks overlap. You may be close friends with a business associate, or a family member may help you make a professional connection. And more and more networking is being done online. But these networks can serve as useful groupings in determining your NQ.

Two components go into your NQ: part A focuses on the scope and strength of your existing network, and part B focuses on how active you are in building and maintaining your network. With these components in mind, assess your NQ by honestly answering the following questions on a scale of 0–4:

Part A: Network Scope and Strength

1. How many total people are in your personal, professional, and virtual networks? Add them all together.

0 = Under 10

1 = 11–100

2 = 101–200

3 = 201–400

4 = more than 400

2. How strong are your relationships with the people in your network? Are the people in your network just *business-card traders* (you traded cards but can hardly remember where or when), *acquaintances* (they know who you are and will probably return a call), *personal contacts* (they'll do a favor if you ask), or *close friends* (you can count on them when the chips are down)?

0 = All business

1 = Mostly acquaintances

2 = Lots of personal contacts

3 = A mix of personal contacts and close friends

4 = Mostly close friends with a few personal contacts and acquaintances

3. How diverse is your network? If everyone you know is the same age and sex as you, shares your cultural background, and works in the same area, your network is not diverse at all. On the other hand, if you network with people from eight to eighty, of both sexes, with a variety of cultural backgrounds, and in different kinds of jobs in different industries, you have a very diverse network.

0 = Looking at my network is like looking in a mirror.

1 = My network includes mostly people like me, but it has some diversity.

2 = My network has a good amount of diversity.

3 = My network includes people from a wide variety of backgrounds and industries.

4 = My network includes many people from a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, and industries.

4. What's the overall quality of your network contacts? Are the people in your network experienced, with significant accomplishments? Do they have strong networks of their own? Are they well known within a professional sphere? Can they open doors for you?
- 0 = I like them, but they aren't movers and shakers by any means.
1 = A few people have some connections.
2 = Some people in my network really command attention.
3 = Many people in my network are at the top of their fields and very well connected.
4 = I can contact almost anyone on earth through the people in my network.

Part B: Networking Activities

5. To what extent do you actively work on building your network relationships? Do you follow up after the first meeting? Do you make sure to periodically connect with people? Do you return phone calls and answer e-mails promptly? Do you try to meet face-to-face regularly?
- 0 = I don't have time for all that.
1 = I try to reach out if I can find the time.
2 = I try to make time, but it's hit or miss.
3 = I consistently make time to connect with people.
4 = I make connecting with people my top priority every day.
6. How often do you actively recruit new members to your network?
- 0 = Never
1 = Rarely
2 = Sometimes
3 = Often
4 = All the time

7. How often do you help others in your network (both when asked for help and unsolicited)?
- 0 = Never
 - 1 = Rarely
 - 2 = Sometimes
 - 3 = Often
 - 4 = All the time
8. To what extent do you leverage the Internet to build and maintain your networks?
- 0 = Never
 - 1 = Rarely
 - 2 = Sometimes
 - 3 = Often
 - 4 = All the time

Add your scores together and multiply the total by 5. You'll end up with an NQ between 0 and 160. The following chart interprets your score:

- 0–80 Below Average**—networking has not been on your radar screen
You need to be much more active in establishing and maintaining connections.
- 81–110 Average**—nothing to brag about
You could benefit from being much more proactive.
- 111–140 Above Average**—a natural networker
You are doing well, but a more systematic effort can help.
- 141–160 Networking Genius!**

You know it takes ongoing effort to maintain your network.

How did you do? Are you a networking neophyte or a world-class contender? Does this self-assessment point to some areas for improvement? Remember, no matter what your score, you can always get better.

Analyzing Your NQ

Now let's dig into the details of your answers to the NQ survey. Add up your answers for part A and part B separately. Since part A assesses the strength of your current network and part B assesses the time and effort you put into networking, the scores should be similar. We should expect, after all, a direct correlation between the amount of time and effort we put into networking and the results we achieve.

If your results are out of whack (you score much higher on one part of the assessment than the other), you should take a few minutes to consider why that may be. If your score on part A indicates that you have a strong and vibrant network while your score on part B indicates that you do not put much time and effort into networking, you're in a highly unusual situation. You've gotten something for nothing. Perhaps you inherited your network, and interested family members are doing all the work to keep you included. Perhaps your spouse or a close associate is a genius networker and you are just going along for the ride. This could be a dangerous situation, and you might wake up one day and find no one bothers to return your calls any longer. Remember, it is your responsibility to build and maintain your network—no one else's.

The more likely situation, if your scores for parts A and B are significantly different, is that your part B score is higher than your part A score. In other words, your networking activi-

ties are not producing much in the way of actual results. As you read the rest of this book, you will have plenty of opportunities to consider what you might want to do differently, discarding unproductive activities for those that expert networkers have demonstrated produce results.

Also take a moment to look at your lowest scores for both parts, which can show you where you should invest the most effort. You may have a large network with strong relationships, for example, but lack diversity and quality. As you work to build your network, you can directly address those issues. Or you may discover that you rarely give back to people in your network. Over time, this can lead to people labeling you as a “user”—and cause them to distance themselves from you.

You now have a basic measure of your NQ. In the chapters that follow, you’ll learn how to effectively build, nurture, and leverage your personal, professional, and virtual networks. My “Top Ten List of Successful Networking Tips” gives you a taste of what we’ll cover.

In the next chapter, I’ll describe my personal journey in developing my network of friends and associates. My hope is that you will not only learn from my experience but also be inspired

Top Ten List of Successful Networking Tips

1. Keep networking at the top of your priority list every day.
2. Help others in your network, first and foremost.
3. Build a PBOD (Personal Board of Directors) to support your career and life.
4. Get organized—in whatever way works best for you.
5. Map your current network. It's probably better than you think.
6. Play "One Degree of Separation" to see whom you might include in your network.
7. Be interested in people and ask them a lot of questions. Networks are built through personal connections, and you never know how you might connect with someone.
8. Go for quality over quantity.
9. Diversity, diversity, diversity! The more, the better.
10. Build your personal brand.

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Building Strong Personal, Professional, and Virtual Networks***

by Michael Dulworth

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